

Rock Work Slated Soon On Big Dworshak Dam

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AHSAHKA — Fog that intrudes into every convolution of the land at this time of year gives Dworshak damsite a look of languorous gray, with bared hillsides bisected by a twisting river.

Smoke, rising from the burning brush and trees taken from the stripped slopes, mingles and is lost in the mist. The fires are the beginning of a \$210-million project which will change the economic face of northern Idaho.

Dworshak Dam, 1½ miles from Ah-sahka on the North Fork of the Clearwater River, promises to be the biggest thing to happen in the Clearwater country. With the opening of bids Wednesday at Walla Walla on the \$4-million diversion tunnel and fish passage, the dam will be on its way up. By 1972, the dam is scheduled to be finished. Its power generators will harvest the kinetic energy of free water and control flooding.

Orofino, the nearest incorporated town, stands to gain population rapidly beginning in 1965. Total employment at the damsite is expected to hit 680 by the end of next year. The peak will arrive in 1968, when 1,930 employes will be building the main part of the 673-foot-high concrete dam. Mayor A. B. Curtis of Orofino, who has worked for years to get the dam authorized by Congress, estimates Orofino will have 12,000-15,000 people during the construction compared with the present 2,500.

It was a long and often frustrating campaign to get the dam on the federal government's construction list. Originally it was to be Bruce Eddy Dam. The name came from a point on the North Fork where the dam will be. Bruce Lipscomb

who drowned there in 1887 while doing a railroad location study, gave the point its name. When Sen. Henry Dworshak, R-Idaho, died in 1962, a successful effort to change the name to Dworshak Dam was begun in Congress, and the late President John F. Kennedy signed a bill for the re-naming in October of 1963.

To Award Contract

A 40-foot diameter diversion tunnel in the contract to be awarded Wednesday by the Army Corps of Engineers will be built around the damsite—the first tangible construction. About 150 men will be employed to build the tunnel through the mountainside to handle the river flow until the dam is completed. Several changes in the specifications have been made since the original drawings were completed, including a change in plans for protecting migrating fish.

Work so far has been financed by an \$8.5-million appropriation for the 1964 fiscal year. Part of that went for a detour road site clearing, and the diversion tunnel. Curtis said about \$11-million will be needed for the next fiscal year. And in 1967, when the prime contract for the cofferdam and main dam will be let, about \$123-million will be needed.

First phase of brush and tree clearing is scheduled to be finished by next week by Hubner & Michner, Inc., Denver. Rock work on the diversion tunnel probably will begin soon after the contract is awarded. Logs coming downriver in the spring will pass through the diversion tunnel, Curtis said, on their way to the main Clearwater River and then to Lewiston mills.

The fish passage problem, which involves salmon and steelhead swimming upriver to spawn, was a matter of concern to wildlife experts and sportsmen alike. In fact, the question of how to get fish around dams anywhere — Brownlee, Ice Harbor or Bonneville—has raised more argument among laymen than anything else.

The first plan announced by Army Engineers was to use a bucket system in which a cable tramway would lift buckets vertically to clear the upstream coffer dam crest and then 1,200 feet horizontally to deposit the fish in the river upstream. This kind of equipment was used at Ice Harbor Dam.

Now the Corps has come up with plans, said Curtis, that call instead for a catch basin which fish will be induced to enter. Then they will be lifted to the top of the dam and put in a 1,000-gallon truck. Two trucks working in rotation will take the fish six miles upstream and put them back into the North Fork to continue their journey.

A fish hatchery also is being planned by the federal government in the Peck-Lenore area, Curtis said, to help stock the pool behind the dam when it is finished.



CLEARING UNDER WAY — This view of the North Fork of the Clearwater River near Bruces Eddy shows how clearing has progressed in anticipation of the beginning of

construction of Dworshak Dam. A contract to begin work on a diversion tunnel will be let this week by the Army Corps of Engineers.

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of the time. Previous fears that fingerlings would be killed in vast numbers by going through turbines have been at least partially calmed by tests at Cushman Dam No. 2 at Tacoma, Wash., and Shasta Dam in California. Neutral-charge "electric fences" in the water will help school the fish together to get them through the dam.

Fish will have a reservoir 53

miles long in which to swim when the dam backs up the river. Nearly 17,000 acres will be inundated by the water. Half of that is in private ownership, and the state, U. S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management own the remainder. Most of the land to go under water is in forest.

Orofino is looking forward to becoming something of a latter-day "boom town," although the

spirit is less gaudy than that at Hungry Horse, Mont., which proudly bore the name "Best Dam Town By A Damsite" while Hungry Horse Dam was under construction.

Employees and their families are expected to total 1,940 in 1965; 1,965 in 1966; 3,920 in 1967; 5,470 in 1968; 4,500 in 1969; 3,050 in 1970, and 1,450 in 1971. Of those totals, about 380 government employees and their fami-

lies will be involved with the dam at the height of activity.

Curtis and others in the Orofino area hope to persuade the federal government to spend enough money to make the dam a major tourist attraction. They want a visitors' center with exhibits and guided tours.

Recreation, such as boating and fishing, also will be a dollar factor in the 1970s, when the dam is finished and the reservoir fills.